

Message Text

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INFO AMEMBASSY BERLIN UNN

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LIMDIS

E O 11652: GDS

TAGS: WB, GW, GE, UK, FR, UR, US, PGOV, PFOR

SUBJ: THE NEW BERLIN SITUATION AND POSSIBLE COUNTERMEASURES

REFS: A) BONN A-38, FEB 7, 1977; B) BERLIN 5217; C) STATE 25310

1. SUMMARY: ADDRESSEES ARE AWARE OF THE SERIES OF RECENT
GDR ACTION IN BERLIN (LISTED BELOW FOR PURPOSES OF CON-
VENIENCE). SOME OF THESE ACTIONS HAVE BEEN COMPLETED,
OTHER ARE IN PROCESS. SOME ARE MINOR IN SCOPE; OTHERS
GO TO THE HEART OF THE STATUS OF CITY AS THE WEST VIEWS
IT. TAKEN CUMULATIVELY AND WITH DUE REGARD FOR THE
COMPRESSED TIME FRAME IN WHICH THEY HAVE OCCURRED, WE
THINK IT FAIR TO SAY THAT THEY REPRESENT A SIGNIFICANT
CHANGE IN THE EAST'S TACTICAL POLICY TOWARD BERLIN. SUCH
IS ALSO THE VIEW OF MANY OF OUR CONTACTS HERE AMONG FRG AND
SENAT OFFICIALS, DIPLOMATS, ALLIES AND
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NEWSPAPERMEN. IT IS THE RECOMMENDATION OF THE MISSION
THAT THE GDR OFFENSIVE OF THE PAST HALF YEAR BE MET
MORE FIRMLY THAN THE WEST HAS DONE AS YET. WE
BELIEVE THAT SOME ACTION NOW WOULD REDUCE THE CHANCES
THAT WE WILL BE CONFRONTED WITH STILL MORE SERIOUS
SOVIET/GDR INITIATIVES IN THE FUTURE. END SUMMARY.

2. THE SITUATION

WE AGREE WITH THE DEPT'S AVIEW (REF C) THAT THERE IS NO INCONTROVERTIBLE EVIDENCE AT THIS POINT THAT THE SOVIETS OR THE GDR AT THE PRESENT TIME HAVE IN MIND A CAMPAIGN AGAINST ALLIED ACCESS RIGHTS IN EAST BERLIN. WE BELIEVE, HOWEVER, THAT THERE IS SUFFICIENT EVIDENCE THAT THEY HAVE FOCUSSED ON THIS UNWANTED ALLIED PRESENCE IN EAST BERLIN, AND WE ALSO DETECT A NOTICEABLY HARSHER TONE IN RECENT SOVIET AND EAST GERMAN STATEMENTS ON BERLIN. IN THE SAME CONTEXT, WE WOULD CITE THE INCREASED WILLINGNESS OF THE GDR TO FLOUT ALLIED LAWS AND REGULATIONS GOVERNING THE REICHSBAHN IN WSB AND THE INCREASING FORCE OF SOVIET ASSERTIONS THAT THE QA APPLIES ONLY TO THE WSB, WITH THE IMPLICATION THAT THE SOVIETS HAVE, OR SHOULD HAVE, A CODETERMINATIVE ROLE IN WSB MATTERS.

3. WE ARE IN BASIC AGREEMENT WITH THE EXCELLENT ANALYSIS OF THE BERLIN SITUATION CONTAINED IN BONN'S A-38, AND THIS TELEGRAM IS INTENDED TO BUILD ON THAT ANALYSIS. A-38 STATES (P. 6) THAT "IT IS IMPOSSIBLE TO JUDGE WHETHER WE HAVE SEEN THE END OF THE ACTION FOR THE TIME BEING, OR WHETHER THERE IS MORE TO COME." IN OUR VIEW, IT IS IMPORTANT TO TRY TO REDUCE THE LIKELIHOOD OF THERE BEING MORE TO COME BY ACTING NOW. WE ALSO BELIEVE IT IMPORTANT THAT OUR ACTIONS GO BEYOND ORAL STATEMENTS OF CONCERN, AT WHATEVER LEVEL, WITHOUT MEANING TO DEPRECATE THE SIGNIFICANCE OF SUCH CONFIDENTIAL

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STATEMENTS. WHAT IS NECESSARY IS TO MAKE THE SOVIETS BELIEVE THAT WE MEAN WHAT WE SAY, AND THAT UNLESS STOPPED AND PREFERABLY REVERSED, THE SOVIET/GDR CAMPAIGN WILL HAVE SERIOUS CONSEQUENCES, NOT DESIRED BY THE SOVIETS.

4. OUR RECOMMENDATION IS THAT THE US, BOTH UNILATERALLY AND IN CONJUNCTION WITH THE BRITISH, FRENCH, AND GERMANS, UNDERTAKE A SERIES OF COORDINATED AND GRADUATED MEASURES TO SHOW THAT WE HAVE NOT ACCEPTED THE CHIPPING AWAY AT THE QA DURING THE PAST MONTHS, AND WOULD REACT TO SUBSEQUENT, LARGER STEPS WHICH THE EAST MAY UNDERTAKE THROUGH CALCULATION OR MISCALCULATION. IF CONVERSELY, WE SIMPLY CONTINUE OUR PRESENT COURSE WHILE GDR CONSOLIDATES ITS RECENT GAINS, IT IS OUR EXPECTATION BASED ON PAST EXPERIENCE THAT THE GDR IN DUE COURSE WILL ATTEMPT TO STRIP AWAY THE REMAINING VESTIGES OF THE SPECIAL STATUS OF EAST BERLIN WHICH WOULD LEAD THEM DIRECTLY

INTO THE AREA OF ALLIED ACCESS. WE WANT THEIR SALAMI SLICER PUT AWAY NOW, BEFORE BERLIN AGAIN BECOMES AN UNWANTED AND DAMAGING ELEMENT TO MORE IMPORTANT FACETS OF EAST/WEST RELATIONS. IN THIS CONNECTION, WE URGE ADDRESSEES NOT TO BE TEMPTED OVERLOOK THIS OR THAT INDIVIDUAL ACTION THE GDR HAS TAKEN, WHICH IS DESCRIBED BY SOVIET INTERLOCUTORS AS "UNIMPORTANT." IT IS THE CUMULATIVE ASPECT WHICH IS REVEALING AND WHICH LIES AT THE BASIS OF OUR UNEASINESS, AN UNEASINESS SHARED AS INDICATED BY MANY IF NOT ALL OF OUR CONTACTS HERE.

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4. WHAT HAS THE OTHER SIDE DONE IN THE LAST SIX MONTHS?

THE GDR, WITH SPECIFIC OR GENERAL SOVIET APPROVAL, HAS RECENTLY:

- A. VIOLATED THE QA DIRECTLY ON AUGUST 13 IN BLOCKING BUS LOADS OF JUNGE UNION MEMBERS FROM PROCEEDING TO WEST BERLIN;
- B. APPARENTLY CEASED PUBLICATION OF THE EAST BERLIN GAZETTE (VERORDNUNGSBLATT), THE PROCEDURE FOR APPLYING GDR LAWS IN EAST BERLIN INDIRECTLY;
- C. ESTABLISHED A VISA REQUIREMENT FOR ONE DAY

VISITS TO EAST BERLIN BY NATIONALS OF THIRD STATES;

D. REMOVED GUARD POSTS ON THE BORDER BETWEEN EAST BERLIN AND THE GDR;

E. ISSUED ARM BANDS READING "BORDER TROOPS OF THE GDR" TO VOPOS AT CHECKPOINT CHARLIE;

F. DISCONTINUED THE AUSWEIS OR ID CARD WHICH
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FORMERLY DISTINGUISHED EAST BERLIN VOLKSKAMMER MEMBERS FROM THEIR GDR COLLEAGUES;

G. IS CONSIDERING, ACCORDING TO A GOOD SOURCE, THE INCORPORATION OF GDR TERRITORY INTO EAST BERLIN IN CONNECTION WITH THE ESTABLISHMENT OF A NINTH BEZIRK IN EAST BERLIN. SUCH A STEP WOULD BE A UNILATERAL CHANGE IN THE BOUNDARIES OF GREATER BERLIN LAID DOWN IN THE KWADRIPARTITE OCCUPATION AGREEMENT OF 1944;

H. OBVIOUSLY HAS DIRECTED THE REICHSBAHN TO FLOUT ALLIED LAWS AND REGULATIONS IN THEIR WEST BERLIN OPERATIONS;

I. COOPTED EAST BERLIN MAYOR KRACK INTO THE GDR COUNCIL OF MINISTERS, THUS FURTHER BLURRING THE DIVISION BETWEEN EAST BERLIN AND THE GDR.

J. INDIVIDUALLY, THESE MEASURES RANGE FROM IMPORTANT (4-A,B,H) TO TRIVIAL (4-D, F). THEY HAVE BEEN REINFORCED BY OTHER INDICATIONS OF A MORE OFFENSIVE EASTERN POSTURE. THE SOVIETS HAVE EXPRESSED DISSATISFACTION WITH US FLAG TOURS IN EAST BERLIN. THE GDR HAS DEMANDED PAYMENT OF NEW OR HIGHER TARIFFS FOR ALLIED PASSENGER AND FREIGHT RAIL TRAFFIC. THE LEVEL OF EASTERN BLUSTER HAS GENERALLY INCREASED.

5. ABOVE MEASURES, TAKEN IN CONJUNCTION WITH UNFAVORABLE INNER-GERMAN DEVELOPMENTS AND WITH THE GDR'S APPARENT INTENTION TO STIFFEN ITS INTERNAL CONTROLS, SUGGEST TO US A COORDINATED CAMPAIGN PROBABLY DISCUSSED LAST SUMMER AND FINALLY APPROVED AT THE BUCHAREST WARSAW PACT MEETING LAST NOVEMBER. THUS FAR, THESE GDR MOVES HAVE HAD THE EFFECT OF CAUSING A DEGREE OF POPULAR UNEASINESS, AND SOME CDU POLITICIANS NOW SPEAK OF A NEW BERLIN CRISIS OR OF THE FAILURE OF THE QA. FANNING OUT AT THE FOREIGN PRESS RECEPTION ON FEB 8, AN ARRAY OF
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SOVIET DIPLOMATS AND JOURNALISTS GAVE WESTERN JOURNALISTS THE THREE-POINT SOVIET LINE: A) THE MEASURES ARE UNIMPORTANT ANYWAY; B) THEY ARE IN REACTION TO FRG EFFORTS TO INCREASE ITS PRESENCE IN BERLIN; AND C) THE QA COVERS ONLY WSB.

6. WHAT DO DO?

WE COULD SWALLOW THE LOSSES OF THE PAST MONTHS AND CONTINUE TO RESPOND ISSUE-BY-ISSUE AS WE HAVE IN THE PAST. THIS APPROACH HAS ITS ADHERENTS IN LONDON AND PARIS JUDGING FROM VIEWS EXPRESSED TO US HERE AND FROM THE VISIT TO EAST BERLIN OF THE BRITISH SECRETARY OF STATE FOR TRADE ONLY DAYS AFTER A "SERIOUS" ALLIED PROTEST HAD BEEN MADE BY THE BRITISH POLAD TO THE SOVIETS ABOUT GDR ACTIONS. THIS COURSE WOULD IMPLY A BELIEF THAT THE SOVIET INTEREST IN DOING BUSINESS WITH THE US AND THE WEST WILL CAUSE THEM TO RESTRAIN THE GDR. IT ALSO CARRIES THE IMPLICATION CHARGES THAT WE WILL WAIT TO DO BATTLE UNTIL THE OTHER SIDE REACHES ONE OF OUR WESTERN RUBICONS-ALLIED ACCESS OR BERLIN/EC TIES, THE LATTER POINT MADE IN BONN'S A-38.

7. ALTERNATIVELY, AND IN OUR VIEW PREFERABLY, WE COULD STAKE OUT A GRADUATED SERIES OF COUNTERMEASURES DESIGNED IF POSSIBLE TO OBTAIN A PARTIAL ROLL-BACK OF THE EASTERN POSITION. REAPPEARANCE OF THE VERORDNUNGSBLATT FOR EXAMPLE WOULD SIGNAL A HALT TO THE GDR CAMPAIGN IF WE COULD OBTAIN SUCH A RESULT. WE BELIEVE THERE IS CONSIDERABLE LEVERAGE ON THE WESTERN SIDE IF THE WILL TO USE IT AND THE ENERGY TO COORDINATE PROPERLY IS THERE.

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8. POSSIBLE COUNTERMEASURES

WE RECOMMEND THAT CONSIDERATION BE GIVEN TO
FORMULATING A PACKAGE INCLUDING ONE OR MORE OF THE
FOLLOWING:

A. A HIGH-LEVEL UNILATERAL APPROACH IN WASHINGTON
TO MAKE THE POINT THAT ATTACKS ON BERLIN STATUS ARE
DIRECTLY HARMFUL TO US/SOVIET BILATERAL RELATIONS:
(WE ARE AWARE OF SIMILAR RECOMMENDATIONS FROM BONN
AND WITHIN THE DEPARTMENT);

B. REMINDING THE SOVIETS ON A TRIPARTITE BASIS
THAT THE QA REFLECTS A BALANCE OF INTERESTS AN THAT
A UNILATERAL ALTERATION ON THEIR SIDE WOULD AFFECT
OUR POLITICAL AND LEGAL PERCEPTIONS CONCERNING BERLIN'S
TIES TO THE WEST;

C. ARRANGING TO TAKE, PREFERABLY IN COORDINATION
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WITH THE BRITISH AND FRENCH, A NUMBER OF BILATERAL STEPS
VIS-A-VIS GDR ALONG THE LINES OUTLINED IN REF B.

D. MODIFYING THE MANTELGESETZ PROCEDURE UNLESS
OR UNTIL THE VERORDNUNGSBLATT REAPPEARS;

E. PERMITTING BERLIN VOTERS TO ELECT THEIR
REPRESENTATIVES TO THE BUNDESTAG AND/OR THE EC
PARLIAMENT;

F. CEASING TO ASSIST THE SOVIETS IN THEIR WEST
BERLIN ACTIVITIES SUCH AS THE STAGING OF TRADE AND
CULTURAL FAIRS, ETC. AND INSTITUTING A LOW-LEVEL BUT
UNMISTAKABLE DEGREE OF HARASSMENT INSTEAD; WE HAVE
IN MIND HERE SUCH MEASURES AS A QUICK PNG OPERATION
AGAINST ANY SOVIET SUSPECTED TO BE ENGAGED IN ESPION-
AGE, CLOSING DOWN THE LOOPHOLE IN BK/O(67)7 DESIGNED
TO PREVENT THE SOVIETS AND EAST EUROPEAN FROM ABUS-
ING THE PRIVILEGE WHICH ALLOWS THEM TO STAY 31 DAYS
WITHOUT SATISFYING NORMAL RESIDENCE AND VISA REQUIRE-
MENTS, AND ENCOURAGING THE SENAT NOT TO PROVIDE FUNDS,
FACILITIES AND OTHER ASSISTANCE FOR THE MANY ACTIVITIES
THE SOVIETS CONDUCT FOR PUBLIC RELATIONS IN WEST BERLIN.

9. WE RECOGNIZE THE DIFFICULTIES INHERENT IN EACH OF THESE PROPOSALS AND WOULD LIKE TO COMMENT IN PARTICULAR ON B ABOVE. A TYPICAL BERLIN PARADOX IS INVOLVED HERE. IT IS TRUE THAT IF THE SOVIETS ARE ANNOYED AT PRESENT FRG-BERLIN TIES MUCH LESS THEIR DEVELOPMENT, IT COULD BE CONSIDERED BY SOME AS "FANNING THE FLAMES" TO SUGGEST ADDITIONAL DEVELOPMENT AS A POSSIBLE RESPONSE. BUT WE BELIEVE THE OPPOSITE CONCLUSION IS THE MORE JUSTIFIED: THAT THE SOVIETS WOULD REACT CONSTRUCTIVELY TO A MESSAGE SAYING IN EFFECT: IF YOU DO NOT WISH TO SEE ADDITIONAL FRG/BERLIN TIES, THEN DESIST FROM BREAKING UP A BALANCE DRAWN FIVE YEARS AGO, WHICH WAS AND STILL IS MUTUALLY TOLERABLE TO BOTH SIDES.

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10. IN CONCLUSION, WE DO NOT PRESUME TO JUDGE THE OVERALL EAST/WEST SITUATION NOR THE US/USSR BALANCE OF INTERESTS BUT IT SEEMS FROM HERE THAT US INTERESTS WOULD BE WELL-SERVED IF WE SEEK TO BUTTRESS VICE PRESIDENT MONDALE'S MESSAGE TO BERLINERS THAT WE INSIST ON STRICT OBSERVANCE OF THE QA. WE BELIEVE FURTHERMORE THAT OVERALL US INTERESTS WOULD BE BETTER SERVED IF WE DREW UP AND DEFENDED OUR LINES NOW, NOT AFTER THE GDR HAS SUCCEEDED IN FURTHER ATTENUATING OR DOING AWAY WITH THE FOUR-POWER STATUS OF THE CITY, AND EASTERN PRESSURE IS AIMED MORE DIRECTLY AT THE WSB AND THE ALLIED PRESENCE HERE.

11. WE WILL PROVIDE ADDRESSEES OUR MORE DETAILED ASSESSMENT OF POSSIBLE FACTORS INVOLVED IN RECENT SOVIET/GDR STEPS AND OF OUR AVAILABLE COUNTERMEASURES IN SEPARATE AIRGRAMS. GEORGE

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